



Creating Your Web Presence

a web site worksheet

Your Name and Contact Information



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Intro...

Thanks for your interest in creating a web presence with Ars Longa Web Ware. This worksheet is intended to guide you through the process of choosing your domain name (if you don't already have one) and determining the purpose and audience, functions, and look and feel of your web site.

You can complete the worksheet by typing right in the document and sending it as an attachment to an email.

You can print it out, complete it, and mail it back, if you'd prefer.

Or, you can simply copy and paste the text into the text of an email and sending it to homer@arslongawebware.com.



The process of thinking through the web site should be a positive experience where you get to explore your new web presence so that it can effectively work for you and contribute to your success.

If you find this type of work tedious or daunting, give us a call and we can walk through this step by step. There is nothing scary about this; it is intended only to be empowering.

If anything in this worksheet is confusing to you, please give me a call or email and I'll be happy to explain or elaborate. I've tried to give plenty of examples, but I may miss some things since I'm so familiar with the topic.

In most cases, we'll have the site up and running within days of receiving this questionnaire. And especially if you're fairly clear or explicit in what you want. If you're simply converting your existing site over to our system, much of the work will already be complete.

Since the web and computers in general are often described with a liberal sprinkling (OK... usually a thick coating) of jargon, I've tried to avoid that whenever possible. So what you read may sound very basic to you, or it might not. If you're familiar with the terminology, please forgive this; if you're not, I hope that you find it a helpful tool to dream your web site into being.



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Your Domain Name

The domain name is the web address (also called a URL - universal resource locator) that your visitors will type in their web browser's address bar to reach your site. The easy, simple names were taken years ago, but that doesn't mean that you can't get just the perfect one for you. Sometimes you have to be creative and explore variations on your theme... and end up with a beautiful poetic name.

For instance, for our healing practice, we wanted something evoking the energetic or light body, which is where we work. After a bit of searching, we found that *The Body Luminous* was available, and loved the sound and expansive feel of it.

If you already own your domain name, fabulous. Simply write it in the spot below. If not, use one of the many domain services to find and purchase one. I use GoDaddy because they are low-cost and have good web-based control panels for managing it. Here's a link with a built-in discount: <http://godaddy.com>.



*Some non-expiring GoDaddy promotional codes you can try at checkout--only if the site comes up at full price, as discounts are not cumulative: **slam30** (30% off .com and renewals), **slam2** (20% off), **OYH3** (discounted .com names).*

Write your domain name or names below. It's possible to send more than one domain name to the same site.

Domain Name(s)

Some Notes on Domain Names

Technical Note: When you purchase your domain name, use the domain manager control panel to change the Domain Name Servers (DNS) entries to: **NS1.ARSLONGAWEBWARE.COM** and **NS2.ARSLONGAWEBWARE.COM** [We can do this for you.]

If you know you're going to be using your domain name for a while, it's a good idea to buy the name for several years. Google looks at how long you've owned the name and for how long you've reserved it and uses that in its calculation for page-ranking.

Domain names follow a structure of the domain name, a period, and a site type identifier. The most common one (the dotcom that's ubiquitous in the media) is *.com* (indicating a commercial site). There were a few variations established early on, such as *.net* (network), *.org* (organization), and *.edu* (educational institution). As available and meaningful site names are becoming more rare, there are many more identifiers available, including *.me*, *.name*, *.tv*, *.us*, and others.

Note that you can't use punctuation in the name portion other than dash or underscore. So you could use *the-body-luminous.com* or *the_body_luminous.com*, but not *the.body.luminous.com*



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The Purpose of Your Site

One of the first things to do is to think about what you want the site to do. Why do you need one? Who will be the audience? And what sort of tone do you want to take, both visually and editorially. The better you know your purpose, the closer you'll be able to target advertising, write your content, and so on.

Use this space to put down some of your thoughts

Site Purpose
What do you want the site to do? Why do you want a site anyway?
Who is your audience?
Describe the tone and positioning you will use. <ul style="list-style-type: none">For example, do you want to be mystical, mysterious, commercial, "professional" or have a sense of being an expert, a mentor, or a resource? Any theme that inspires you? Clean or lush?
How much time do you have to devote to site maintenance? <ul style="list-style-type: none">The more complicated a site, the more maintenance there will be, adding new text and image content, writing a blog, etc. How much effort do you want to put in?
How much of your business do you estimate will come from your web site? <ul style="list-style-type: none">Do you think it will be the primary way that new clients find you? Is it more to complete your business identity package and give you a web presence, but not a significant resource? If you think of your web site in terms of a business card (just the facts, Ma'm!), a brochure (info and marketing text that doesn't change often), or a communication (you update your site frequently, communicate or interact with your clients regularly on the site, set your calendar events, or sell products or services), which would yours be?



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E-Mail Accounts

Each site comes with at least one email account for free. Some accounts include multiple email addresses, and it's easy to add more.

You can either check your email through your email client application (such as Mail, Outlook, Outlook Express) or by using a web browser and viewing the secure web page. (Details are sent after all is set up.)

Your email address is always listed as your *email-account@your-domain.com*. So you can have one for the general business emails (*sales@your-domain.com*) and one for your personal email (*pam@your-domain.com*). For instance, we have a site email (*heal@thebodyluminous.com*) which receives all correspondence from the web site, but we also have individual email addresses (*homer@thebodyluminous.com*). The downside is that I have to check two email accounts. If I'm at home, there's no extra work after setting up my email client to check all accounts. If I'm on the road and using the web browser, I have to check multiple accounts.

So, what email account name(s) and how many accounts do you want? List them below.

E-Mail Account(s)

Site Description

After you've determined the purpose and the goals of your site, you'll want to describe it. Search engines use this summary to classify your site, and we place it in the site description field of each web page, so that it gets maximum exposure. (No one really sees it outright, though). So think up a one-paragraph summary and write it below. Don't worry about deathless prose. Just get the main thoughts down. For personal sites, you can use a brief bio [*Julie is an energy healer, massage therapist, and reiki teacher who...*]; for business sites, maybe think of your elevator pitch... a 10-second summary of what you do. [*The Body Luminous focuses on the healing of body and soul using massage therapy and energy work...*]

Site Description



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Site Keywords

Keywords are words that viewers might use to find you on a search engine such as Google. So this is a [fun] experiment in sleuthing out the different ways you can appear. Some may be obvious [*shaman massage therapist reiki teacher master*], some are locations [*sacramento folsom california ca*], and some are even misspellings or plurals [*raykey message christianson*]. Think of 20 or so and write them below, pretty much in order of how important you think they will be. (For example, if you think the primary way to find you might be someone searching Google for *day spas in sacramento*, you'll want to include the three keywords fairly early in the list.) Use lower case and there's no need to separate with commas.

Site Keywords

Quick Notes on How the Site Works

Before we get into deciding the content, let's look quickly at the underpinnings of the site. I use Joomla!, which is an open-source content management system. It's really a fabulous and powerful tool to create the site that works best for you and which allows you to maintain it yourself.

Joomla! (the exclamation point is part of its name) organizes content by Sections and Categories. Sections are the highest level, and categories fall within a section. Each section must have one and may have many categories. When you add content to your web site, you'll assign it to a section and a category, and the site displays your web page or topic in the appropriate place on your site.

You can think of these in whichever way makes the most sense... Sections are like states and categories are like counties, and the topics are like cities.... Sections are Chapter heads, categories are Subheads, and topics are the text paragraphs... Sections are like seasons, categories are like months, and the topics are the days or moments within each... or perhaps Sections are like families, categories are like the individuals in the family, and topics are the thoughts that each have or the words they say.

I think you get it.

Joomla! allows you to add content (text and images) from the web site itself by signing in (only site owners can add content unless you specify otherwise), but you'll need to assign the Section and Category so that Joomla! knows where to display it. For example, I can sign in to my site, add an article to the Journal category, and it



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will automatically display on the Journal page as the most recent article. I don't have to worry about adding a page, or ensuring the menu links work, or any of that stuff that is consistent throughout the site. I can simply focus on the content. And, if I've designed the home page to display a list of the most recently added articles, my new article title automatically appears in that list. Joomla! does all the heavy lifting.

You can always add sections and categories at any time, so don't get too stressed out ensuring that you've got to get everything perfect right now. That said, if you've chosen to develop a fairly extensive site with lots of content, changing the organization later on gets a bit tedious if you need to re-categorize all of your articles. Whatever time you spend up-front like this will pay off in having a site that is easy to navigate, intuitive to your viewers, and easy for you to maintain.

Main Sections

So back to your site. List below the main sections you'd like to set up. Think of these as menu items. If you don't want the section to display on the menu, but either want it for organization or to use later, simply indicate it. [Note that the menu item *Home* is always included and so there is no need to include it.]

When you list your sections, order them how you want the menu to appear. [For example: *Sessions, Classes, Goods and Services, Resources, About Us, Journal*

Menu and Site Structure

Categories and Site Structure

Now let's look at categories and the way that the site is structured. Categories can either be a submenu item or an organizational tool. For instance, in my Journal section, I have several categories, such as *Spirit, Events, Info, Personal Journey*, and so on. However, I don't yet have enough content to break it out into submenus. So I categorize the articles as I write them and, for the time being, they display on the same page. As the content fills up, I'll add submenu items so that articles covering the same subject can be displayed as a group.

As you create the site, rest assured that you can hide or display menu items and submenu items as fits your needs. When you're filling out your site, you might add only the most important, high-level topics. After you've added more content—or even as you add each item—you can display the menu item and its associated topics. So the site can develop according to your schedule and energy without appearing blank or having lots of empty pages.



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So take some time and think about the menu and structure of your website. How do you want it to be organized? Write that structure below as an outline format similar to:

Healing Sessions

- *Overview*
- *Healing Vs. Curing*
- *A Typical Session*
- *Appointments*
- *Gift Certificates*

Classes and Workshops

- *Overview*
- *Munay-Ki*

Menu and Site Structure



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Features You Want

Depending on the goals and purpose of your site, you may want to add some features to complement your text and images. All of our sites come with the ability to add, edit, and remove your own content. But perhaps you want more control, or you want some eye-candy (a photo gallery, for example), or to set up a web storefront. We can do that.

Keep in mind that additional features carry additional overhead, either from an upfront cost, more time to set-up, or additional time for you to maintain it. While we discourage adding features just because they're cool (and many are), if they make sense, further your aims, drive more traffic to the site, or engage your viewers longer, we're all for it. Listed below are several features that are available and an approximate cost in terms of effort or licensing fees. If you don't see what you like, ask and I'm sure it is available.

The key is to get the site you envision that best serves you.

Selected Features Available for Your Site

- Calendar** (add calendar events and categories, show a mini-calendar, list the upcoming events.)
Minimal overhead or effort.
- Newsletter** (automatic subscribe/unsubscribe, set up a custom newsletter and send it out at regular intervals.) *Significant effort to customize and maintain.*
- Random Photos** (chooses an image randomly from a folder to display on your page in a specific location.) *Minimal effort to configure, nothing to maintain.*
- Slide Show** (displays a slide show of selected images, using pans, wipes, or other transition effects)
Minimal effort to configure, nothing to maintain.
- Banner Advertisements or Google Ad Sense advertisement.** (a way to provide revenue by directly selling advertising space, or letting Google display relevant advertisements based on your content)
Minimal effort to set up, banner requires more maintenance for you, Google requires an account.
- Shopping Cart** (a way to sell products from your site) *Significant effort to set up, some effort to maintain, depending on product list.*
- WordPress Blog** (an interactive blog that allows for viewer comments and trackbacks) *Some effort to set up, corresponding effort to maintain based on how active you want to be.*
- Virtual Editor** (a real live person to proof your articles prior to publication) *Moderate effort depending on activity.*
- Other** *What would you like?*



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The Theme of Your Site

In this area, you'll concentrate on the visual aspects of your site. How do you want the site to look, what positioning are you going for, or what is the over-riding feeling you want to evoke in the viewer?

Use this area to put down some thoughts in whatever format you want... free form, essay, or illustration.


Site Theme ~ Look and Feel



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Similar Sites You Like or Dislike

One of the best ways to come up with a design that works for you, conveys the look and feel you want, and accomplishes your goals is to look around and see what you like and dislike about similar sites. List the site address and a brief description of what it is you like or dislike about it. What element do you want to include, which do you definitely want to avoid. That sort of thing. This helps the designer hit much closer to what you want. Look out for background colors, font color combos, the way graphics are used, and that sort of thing.

Similar Sites: What I like and What I don't		
Site Address	Yes!	No!
		



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What's Next?

Well, that should be a great start. Send it in to me and we'll get going. We'll let you know the approximate schedule as to when you'll begin seeing the site design and when you can start adding your content. Use this time to begin writing your site content as the thoughts are fresh. That way, when you can begin, you'll fly along and have your site up in no time at all.

In the mean-time, if you're going to be including images for slideshows, or simply don't have the means or time to optimize your images for the web, begin assembling the files you'll want to use and send them to me. Include as large of a group as you want, and probably more than you think you'll need. If you want to organize them into logical groups (such as people, places, things), by all means do so. Keep the file names short and sweet, if you can.

I can quickly process them in a couple of sizes and optimize them for the web. What I probably won't do is crop them or otherwise manipulate them unless we talk about it first. I'll optimize them for the web and copy them to your web site so that you can quickly choose them as you write your topics.

If you have a logo, by all means send it.

Use this space to write down any last thoughts or directives. As always, we appreciate your allowing us to serve you.

One more thing...